

DECLARATION OF ARARIPE

The 1st Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) Conference of Geoparks was held from 17 to 19 November 2010 in the Geopark of Araripe, Brazil, under the auspices of UNESCO and was attended by 250 delegates and representatives from different countries and continents.

As result of the meetings and discussions held during this event, the **Declaration of Araripe** was adopted by the participants, as follows:

1. The Geoparks developed with the support of UNESCO constitute the new territories of the 21st century.

The philosophy and vision of these territories, where conservation, valorisation and education of the Geological Heritage – the memory of the Earth–, the Natural Heritage and Cultural Heritage tangible and intangible, are subject to sustainable development and correspond to the need and concerns of the peoples in the continental region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

2. These countries have to make efforts to create and develop the Geoparks acknowledging the values of their realities, based on one of the greatest biodiversities of the world with a wide and diversified geological history which may be discovered through exceptional places, of long history and human memories, conserved, among others, thanks to the presence of the indigenous peoples, who transmit in this way a holistic view of the relationship between the Earth and its inhabitants through the rescue of their identities.

3. The projects for the creation of Geoparks shall only have sense and become successful with the effective participation of everyone without exception.

The definition of the different heritage elements of a territory, its interests and needs of use, conservation and values, should result from the research of multidisciplinary scientific teams (geologists, paleontologists, biologists, educators, ethnologists, historians, economists, promoters, etc.). The policies of sustainable development should be resulted from the consideration of pluridisciplinary teams where authorities should be included at all levels, as well as the representatives of the local community and members of the society in general.

4. One of the singularities and human value of our continental region is the presence of the indigenous peoples. They have gained their right to self-determination. They are assumed to be the mirror of the natural world in which they live and hold traditional knowledge and have protection rights on knowledge of plants, highlighting the development of medicinal plants, animals, landscapes, rocks and minerals. This ethical, spiritual and sacred relationship with nature should be understood as an additional immeasurable value for all the projects of Geoparks in the Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. The sustainable development in a Geopark does not necessarily imply a tourism undertaking or the opening of natural territories sensitive to mass tourism. It is, in fact, a conscious, responsible and independent tourism. A Geopark should be a real territory of ideas and projects, and its strategy of sustainable development should be innovative, weighted, integrated and respectful of local traditions and wills, and should offer equal opportunities for its people. In addition, the creation of a brand for the products of the Geopark's territory based on a series of quality specifications, shall constitute an important element for its economic development.

6. The Geoparks represent the symbol of a territory of high quality which shall be barely reached with a coordinated work at local, national, regional and global level. It shall allow the development of tools for regional and global cooperation through exchange of experiences and management practices among Geoparks and the proposal of multiplicity of training actions not only from the socio-economic stakeholders of the territory but also by the future managers of new Geoparks projects.

7. The government of the State of Ceará, a creator, together with the Regional University of Cariri, the first Geopark of Latin America and the Caribbean, with the support of the government of Brazil, pledges with this declaration to mobilize the human, technological and economic resources to support and facilitate the development of Geoparks projects in this region, to advance for the creation of a future Latin American and the Caribbean Geoparks Network.

Agreed in the Araripe Geopark (Ceará, Brazil), on 19 November 2010.